

Although sovereignty was long ago transferred, the Iraqis remain on the receiving end of a 9,996-kilometer screwdriver that officials in Washington still wield in their effort to shape the future of Iraq. The most recent example of U.S. tutelage at work was the amending of an amnesty plan put forth by Premier Nuri al-Maliki on Sunday. An earlier version offered to pardon Iraqi insurgents who have attacked U.S. troops. But after a series of closed-door talks between U.S. and Iraqi officials, Maliki announced a watered-down version of the amnesty, one which is unlikely to lure any of the major insurgent groups that aren't already participating in the political process.

It is understandable that U.S. officials would react with outrage to the idea of forgiving insurgents with American blood on their hands. As Senator Carl Levin said, "the idea that they should even consider talking about amnesty for people who have killed people who liberated their country is unconscionable." But Senator Levin and others like him seem to forget that liberating something means setting it free.

The Iraqis need the space to make hard decisions that will help them restore stability in their country. But they will never find this space so long as U.S. officials continue to micro-manage the Iraqi government according to their own plan. What the Iraqis really need most now is what the Americans promised them long ago: freedom. And that ought to include the freedom to govern their own country in a way that will benefit the Iraqi people.

REINTEGRATING EX-OFFENDERS BACK INTO NORMAL LIFE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, the problem of successfully reintegrating ex-offenders back into normal life is one of the major issues facing especially low-income and minority communities throughout the Nation.

This problem continues to fester throughout the United States of America. It is indeed a social as well as a public safety problem. Nearly 650,000 people are being released from Federal and State prisons this year. There are over 3,200 jails throughout the United States, the vast majority of which are operated by county governments. Each year these jails will release in excess of 10,000 people back into communities throughout the Nation. We will continue to have these massive releases over the next several years. The massive increase in incarceration in the United States that occurred during the past 25 years now must turn public attention toward the consequences of incarceration without providing meaningful rehabilitation measures and access to reentry programs and opportunities.

As we know, the large numbers of ex-offenders being released from prison will cause enormous public safety problems for many communities, especially where large numbers of ex-offenders will return and live in the same neighborhoods.

The Justice Department reported that the cost of crime to victims is ap-

proximately \$450 billion a year. Therefore, these communities will absorb the high cost of further victimization as a result of the presence of such a high number of ex-offenders.

The Congressional Black Caucus is concerned about the administration not requesting or adequately funding the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program, Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program, Gang Prevention Program, Juvenile Accountability Block Grant, Juvenile Delinquency Block Grants and other programs.

The Congressional Black Caucus recommended increasing the funding level up to \$3.1 billion for Justice programs and to expand the re-entry programs for nonviolent ex-offenders to facilitate their transition from prison to normal community life.

The CBC wants to ensure that specific programs are receiving adequate funding to prevent crime, increase public safety, and reduce recidivism. We, of course, can do that by passing the Second Chance Reentry Bill that now has more than 100 sponsors in the House, 22 sponsors in the Senate, is actually awaiting markup in the Judiciary Committee. And I would urge all of my colleagues to sign on, join up, help rehabilitate and prepare the individuals who are coming home from jail and prison. Support the Second Chance Reentry Bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. OSBORNE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BROWN of Ohio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. KAPTUR addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

TRIBUTE TO THE DAHL FAMILY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. KIND) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIND. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Dahl family of Viroqua, Wisconsin. With their operation of the Dahl Pharmacy for more than 100 years and four generations, the Dahls wove themselves into the fabric of their community. Their pharmacy has been one of the pillars of Viroqua's downtown business district for over a century. From medication to a soda fountain, prescriptions to snacks, all sorts of services have been available to old and young alike since the early 1900s.

Chuck and Karen Dahl are good friends of mine who owned and operated the pharmacy for many years. Decent, principled people, the Dahls worked hard to grow a successful small business that would be attentive to local concerns. They have been actively involved in their community, displaying their belief in the responsibility to give back to the people who allowed their business to prosper. The Dahls' leadership has made the city of Viroqua and Vernon County better places to live, work, and raise children. In 2001, Chuck and Karen passed the Dahl Pharmacy along to another generation by selling it to Chuck's daughter, Katherine Dahl.

The Dahl Pharmacy, like many providers throughout the Nation, is facing a myriad of complications with the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. I commend Dahl and all the other pharmacies which have been on the frontlines of this new program. They have tirelessly served seniors uncertain about the new Medicare Part D regulations.